

Scandinavian Club – Manawatu Branch.

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The Manawatu Scandy Club was formed in 1979, and became the district's third such club. Members are usually descendants of early Scandinavian immigrants

A History of Scandinavian Clubs in Manawatu Inc.

The formation of the Scandinavian club of Manawatu traces back to the decision to place a plaque on a monument in Mauriceville West in March 1973. A key figure in the ceremony was Ted Mattson of Palmerston North. Around this time also, Wellington man, Malcolm (Mac) Larsen began taking an interest in his family origins. He visited Norway in 1973 and 1975 (and led a tour there in 1980), as well as helping genealogists trace their Scandinavian heritage. He founded the Wellington based New Zealand-Norway Society in 1978,

Mac Larsen's interest in things-Scandinavian did not, however, stop there. On 22 June 1979 at a meeting in Palmerston North, the Scandinavian Club of Manawatu was born. Inspired by this success, Larsen went on to form Scandinavian Clubs in Hawkes Bay (1980), Wairarapa (1981), Dannevirke (1982) and Taranaki (1983). It was to these areas, that the New Zealand Government had sent its early Scandinavian immigrants, and the vast majority of club members are descendants of those people, rather than expatriates. Scandinavian Clubs were formed in other parts of the country as well. A number of single country clubs also exist around the country.

Like most new clubs, the Scandinavian Club of Manawatu's earliest years were very active, In addition to holding functions in Palmerston North, the club hosted what became the first Scandinavian Gathering, held at Norsewood, on the weekend of 5-6 March 1983. Over the years the Club has hosted a number of such gatherings, however, the last of these took place in 2011, with the Scandinavian Gatherings (also called Festivals) ceasing around that time.

Fortunately other groups have formed, and most recently the Viking Festival/s have been taking place at Norsewood - although we get to enjoy them without having to organise them.

In 2021, we mark 150 years since the original Scandinavian imigrants arrived in Palmerston North in 1871. In 2022 the Taranaki and Wairarapa Districts celebrate their first Scandinavian immigrants with special events.

At present, 'Skandia Quarterly', the Club's Newsletter, keeps members up to date with the happenings of the Club not only those residing in New Zealand, but also around the world.

Scandinavian Society – Wairarapa Branch.

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